

value down to their face value, was rapidly driving them out of circulation and silver had long ceased to be offered in any considerable quantities for coinage at the mints.¹ The conference decided that all silver coins below the five-Franc piece should be reduced to 0.835 fine, that their coinage should be limited in each country to six francs per capita, that the subsidiary silver should be received in the public depositaries of each country in amounts not exceeding one hundred francs (\$19.30) and should be a legal tender in the country where coined in amounts of not more than fifty francs (559.65). The Belgian, Swiss, and Italian delegates strongly urged the adoption of the single gold standard, but the proposition was resisted by the French delegates and was not acted upon. The convention putting in effect the decisions reached in the conference was adopted on December 23, 1865, and Greece soon after became a party to it. A monetary conference was held at Paris in connection with the international exposition, which recommended the adoption of the gold standard by the countries taking part, and it was in pursuance of this action that the French government concluded the preliminary convention of July 31, 1867, with Austria, establishing a fixed relation between the franc and the gold florin.³

The formation of the Latin Union, so generally treated to day as a plan to maintain bimetallism, was, in the of a high authority, "a measure of defence against the action of the bimetallic system in those countries which had adopted the monetary system of France, and lay

to all its disastrous fluctuations." ⁸ The effect of the action of the countries forming the Union, in the language of the French monetary commission of 1867, "places in the front rank gold money, and reduces the pieces of silver of two francs and less to the rôle of token money. It

¹ The total coinage of silver at the French mint in 1863 was francs (\$65,000), while the gold coinage was 210,230,640 francs* (£41,000,000). The largest silver coinage since 1856 had francs in 1858, and the largest gold coinage 702,697*790 In 1859^

² *Vide* Ch. viii. and ix.

³ Shaw, 190